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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 STATE 104222

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: A/S FRIED'S MEETING WITH BALKAN MINISTERS ON
SEPTEMBER 25, 1500, WALDORF ASTORIA

REF: STATE 100723

Classified By: DAS STUART JONES FOR REASONS 1.4 (B,D)

11. (U) Participants:

U.S.

Assistant Secretary Daniel Fried
Deputy Assistant Secretary Stuart Jones
Cathy Westley, EUR/SCE

Adriatic Charter 3:

Albania: Foreign Minister Lulzim Basha
Croatia: Foreign Minister Gordan Jandrokovic
Macedonia: Foreign Minister Antonio Milososki

PfP3:

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Foreign Minister Sven Alkalaj
Montenegro: Foreign Minister Milan Rocen
Serbia: Assistant Foreign Minister Fedor Starcevic

12. (C) Summary: The foreign ministers from Adriatic Charter countries Albania, Croatia and Macedonia (A3) agreed to expand the Adriatic Charter to include Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro and to leave the door open for Serbia, during a 60 minute meeting on the margins of UNGA September 25. Assistant Secretary Daniel Fried called the Charter a success important for regional stability. The A3 also discussed difficulties with Serbia over Kosovo recognition and Serbia's sometimes inconsistent "pro-Europe" policy direction. Macedonian FM said the GoM planned to recognize Kosovo in early October, perhaps along with Portugal and Montenegro, despite threats from Serbia. Joining the meeting, the Bosnian and Montenegrin FMs expressed gratitude for the invitation to join the Charter. Serbian Assistant FM, who also joined later, said Serbia planned to continue active Adriatic Charter observer status and step up efforts in the PfP framework, but cautioned that Serbia was "burdened" by Kosovo's recognition by a majority of NATO countries. The A3 and U.S. issued a press release (para 9) noting the decision to invite Bosnia and Montenegro. All agreed on the next steps to formalize the expansion of the Adriatic Charter (see para 8). End Summary.

Charter Expansion; Macedonia Name Issue

13. (C) Meeting first with A3 countries Albania, Croatia and Macedonia only, A/S Fried called the Adriatic Charter "a two-thirds plus" success. Croatia and Albania received NATO invitations; Macedonia fulfilled its membership requirements and would be invited once its bilateral name issue with Greece was resolved. A/S Friend said that NATO enlargement

should continue to include other countries in the region when they are ready and if they want it. Montenegro is in good shape; political stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is eroding. Serbia is a good neighbor on some days and threatening on other days. A/S Fried concluded that expanding the Adriatic Charter to include Montenegro and Bosnia with an door open to Serbia will help strengthen regional cooperation and stability.

14. (C) The A3 representatives agreed. Macedonian FM Milososki expressed gratitude for the Adriatic Charter's success. Macedonia would continue working on its name issue with Greece and welcomed expanding the Charter. Croatian FM Jandrokovic noted the Charter's importance for regional cooperation and said Croatia is ready to invite Bosnia and Montenegro to join. Fully supporting Macedonia's NATO aspirations, he urged that compromise be found with Greece regarding the name issue and said he pressed Greek Foreign Minister Bakoyannis as well. Milososki responded that, according to a recent poll, 85 percent of the Macedonian public supports NATO accession. However, when asked whether Macedonia should change its name to accomplish NATO membership, 75 percent responded no. Albanian FM Basha said he felt the GoA had an obligation to continue and expand the Charter to assist additional countries. Basha continued that Albania is willing to take more ownership of the Adriatic Charter but still wanted U.S. involvement. FM Milososki

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offered that Macedonia, as the current Adriatic Charter chair, would draft a diplomatic note on behalf of the A3 formally inviting Bosnia and Montenegro to join.

A3 on Serbia and Kosovo Recognition

15. (C) Milososki said the GoM planned to recognize Kosovo soon despite threats from Serbia. Jandrokovic said Serbia had also threatened Croatia over Kosovo recognition. Milososki said that Macedonia may recognize Kosovo as a group with Portugal -- and hopefully Montenegro if the GOM is ready -- in early October. Basha added that Serbian officials told him that they would be more upset with Montenegro recognizing Kosovo than Macedonia.

PfP 3: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia

16. (C) During the second half of the meeting, Bosnian FM Alkalaj welcomed the invitation to join the Charter. He noted that with the start of its Intensified Dialogue with NATO, Bosnia was ready to participate. Montenegrin FM Rocen said it was a "great day for Montenegro and the region," noting Montenegro's participation is both a recognition of its progress and a great obligation. He congratulated Albania and Croatia for receiving NATO invitations and said he hoped Macedonia could overcome the name issue with Greece. He emphasized it was important for Serbia to join when "dynamics improve."

17. (C) Serbian Assistant FM Starcevic apologized that FM Jeremic could not attend and read a two-page prepared statement in English. He said Serbia welcomed such meetings as an opportunity to discuss common issues. Serbia plans to continue its active observer status in the Adriatic Charter and step up its involvement with PfP activity. Serbia will formalize its participation in PfP at the October 1 signing of a framework agreement and move ahead on an Individual Partnership Action plan. However, he noted, Serbian activities are "burdened" by Kosovo's recognition by a majority of NATO countries. Nevertheless, Serbia's active cooperation in Western Balkans regional activities was consistent with Serbia's EU aspirations. A/S Fried replied that the U.S. takes seriously Serbia's willingness to cooperate and emphasized the door was open when Serbia was ready; there are no roadblocks to Serbia's European

integration.

Next Steps to Expand the Adriatic Charter

18. (SBU) A/S Fried said he was prepared to attend a minister-level meeting of the expanded Adriatic Charter before the end of 2008, perhaps on the margins of the OSCE foreign ministerial in Helsinki in early December. The FMs agreed. Participants agreed to the following process to formally expand the Charter:

-- As current rotating chair, Macedonia would draft a diplomatic note invitation to Bosnia and Montenegro, circulate it to the A3 and the U.S., and, when finalized, deliver it to Bosnia and Montenegro;

-- Bosnia and Montenegro will reply back via diplomatic note in the affirmative;

-- Each country will pulse their MFA legal departments to gain clarity on the exact mechanism to codify the expansion, i.e., an addendum to the Charter, joint statement or other mechanism;

-- Once the mechanism is decided, language will be circulated beforehand to be agreed upon prior to the expanded meeting in Helsinki;

-- An expanded Adriatic Charter meeting and signing ceremony will be held in Helsinki on the margins of the OSCE Foreign Ministerial December 4-5.

19. (U) Full text of joint statement from Albania, Croatia, Macedonia and the U.S. on expansion of the Adriatic Charter follows.

Begin Text:

For Immediate Release
2008/788

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September 25, 2008

Statement by Sean McCormack, Spokesman

Invitation to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro to Join Adriatic Charter

At a ministerial meeting on September 25 in New York, under the chairmanship of Macedonia, the Member States of the Adriatic Charter -- Albania, Croatia, Macedonia and the United States -- decided to extend an invitation to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro to join the Charter.

This decision was made in the firm belief that this expansion of the Charter will further strengthen mutual cooperation and advance Euro-Atlantic integration.

End Text.
RICE